Course Specifications
Valid as from the academic year 2019-2020

Anthropology of the Body and Performance in Africa (A005382)

Course size
(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)
Credits 5.0
Study time 150 h
Contact hrs 50.0 h

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2019-2020
A (semester 2) English seminar 10.0 h
self-reliant study activities 10.0 h
lecture 30.0 h

Lecturers in academic year 2019-2020
Plancke, Carine LW21 lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2019-2020
Master of Science in Teaching in Languages (main subject African Languages and Cultures) 5 A
Master of Arts in African Studies 5 A
Exchange Programme African Languages and Cultures 5 A

Teaching languages
English

Keywords
Anthropology of the body; Embodiment; Performance; Musical expression and dance; Social change, conflict and creativity; Culture; Central Africa

Position of the course
The course intends to give advanced knowledge of key notions, themes and methods in the field of anthropology of the body and performance, with as regional focus Africa and especially Central Africa. The aim is to look at the body and performance not only as an object of study that gives insights into culture but also as a starting point for understanding the experience and dynamics of cultural realities.

Contents
The course combines an anthropology of the body with an anthropology from the body which focuses on embodiment. The body is considered not only as a product of history and society but also as the living ground of our existence, a source of subjectivity, agency and meaning. From this perspective, the body and performance, which explicitly shapes bodily experience and expression, are seen as ideal subjects to study, from below, the dynamics and experience of complex sociocultural processes in Africa. The course consists of three parts. The first part deals with the origin and evolution of an anthropological interest in the body, embodiment and performance in line with paradigmatic shifts from function to structure and from structure and symbolism to process, practice and experience. In the second part, we will explore the anthropology of the body through topics such as sexuality, gender, death, ethnic violence and disability in contexts of change, conflict, globalisation, marginalisation and commodification. The third part centres on the anthropology of performance, in particular music, dance and trance performance. Special attention is devoted to the affective and creative dynamics and strategic mobilisation of performances in domains such as ritual, religion, nationbuilding, tourism, heritage making and popular culture. Diverse ethnographic studies from Africa, and especially Central Africa, will be discussed.

Initial competences
Basic knowledge in cultural anthropology

(Approved) 1
Final competences

1. To have acquired a good understanding of anthropological approaches to the body and performance and of the different theoretical paradigms within which they are situated
2. To have acquired a good understanding of key notions in the field of anthropology of the body and performance
3. To fully comprehend the method of ethnographic fieldwork and its application in the field of the anthropology of the body and performance
4. To be able to develop a critical reflection on the discussed themes and case studies
5. To be able to situate recent and contemporary changes in Africa with regard to the perception, treatment, expression and experience of the body
6. To be able to develop an anthropological study which starts from the body and/or performance

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'

Conditions for exam contract

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

Teaching methods

Lecture, seminar, self-reliant study activities

Learning materials and price

Reader, available on Minerva
Costs: 0 euros

References

Updated list, see Minerva

Course content-related study coaching

Students are encouraged to interact during class and to ask questions. Feedback is given during class, through email and on appointment.

Evaluation methods

end-of-term evaluation and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic evaluation during the first examination period

Written examination with open questions

Examination methods in case of periodic evaluation during the second examination period

Written examination with open questions

Examination methods in case of permanent evaluation

Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent evaluation

not applicable

Calculation of the examination mark

- 50% written exam: Through a number of open questions, students will be evaluated on their insights and understandings of the different subjects treated during the lectures.
- 50% paper: Each student has to write an individual paper on a subject of choice related to one or more subjects treated during the lectures. Students can only succeed for this course by the participation in and submission of both exam and the paper.

Facilities for Working Students

- Possible exemption from the obligation to attend class if a complementary task is made in agreement with the teacher
- Possible rescheduling of the examination to a different time during the examination period
- Feedback can be given on appointment during office hours or by e-mail.

(Approved)